

HOUSE BILL 679

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By: **Delegates Nathan–Pulliam, Braveboy, Burns, Gaines, Gutierrez, Howard, Hubbard, Ivey, Jones, Morhaim, Murphy, Oaks, B. Robinson, Ross, Tarrant, V. Turner, and Valderrama**

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2012

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Cultural Competency and Health Literacy – Education**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health
4 Disparities to work collaboratively with certain universities and colleges of
5 social work, public health, and allied health to develop certain courses; changing
6 the name of the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Provider Competency
7 Program to be the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional
8 Competency Program; altering the purpose of the Program; including a certain
9 association and certain entities among the groups that are encouraged to
10 identify, develop, or collaborate in the development of certain training
11 programs; altering the requirements for certain training programs; altering
12 certain definitions; requiring a certain report from certain universities, colleges,
13 and higher education programs to certain committees of the General Assembly
14 and the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities on or before
15 a certain date; and generally relating to cultural and linguistic competency and
16 health literacy.

17 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
18 Article – Health – General
19 Section 20–1001(a) and (d)
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2009 Replacement Volume and 2011 Supplement)

22 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
23 Article – Health – General
24 Section 20–1004(15) and 20–1301 through 20–1304
25 Annotated Code of Maryland
26 (2009 Replacement Volume and 2011 Supplement)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
2 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 **Article – Health – General**

4 20–1001.

5 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

6 (d) “Office” means the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health
7 Disparities established under § 20–1002 of this subtitle.

8 20–1004.

9 The Office shall:

10 (15) Work collaboratively with universities and colleges of medicine,
11 nursing, pharmacy, [and] dentistry, **SOCIAL WORK, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND ALLIED**
12 **HEALTH** in this State and other health care professional training programs to develop
13 courses with cultural competency, sensitivity, and health literacy, that are designed to
14 address the problem of racial and ethnic disparities in health care access, utilization,
15 treatment decisions, quality, and outcomes;

16 20–1301.

17 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

18 (b) “Cultural and linguistic competency” means cultural and linguistic
19 abilities that can be incorporated into therapeutic and medical evaluation and
20 treatment, including:

21 (1) Direct communication in the patient’s primary language;

22 (2) Understanding and applying the roles that culture, ethnicity, and
23 race play in diagnosis, treatment, and clinical care; and

24 (3) Awareness of how the attitudes, values, and beliefs of health care
25 providers and patients influence and impact professional and patient relations.

26 (c) “Health care [provider] **PROFESSIONAL**” includes a physician, nurse,
27 dentist, social worker, psychologist, **PHARMACIST, HEALTH EDUCATOR**, or other
28 allied health professional.

29 (d) “Program” means the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care [Provider]
30 **PROFESSIONAL** Competency Program.

1 20–1302.

2 (a) There is a Cultural and Linguistic Health Care [Provider]
3 **PROFESSIONAL** Competency Program.

4 (b) The purpose of the Program is to provide for a voluntary program in
5 which educational classes are offered to health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** to
6 teach health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS**:

7 (1) Methods to improve the health care [provider’s] **PROFESSIONALS’**
8 cultural and linguistic competency to communicate with non–English speaking
9 patients and patients from other cultures who are English speaking;

10 (2) Cultural beliefs and practices that may impact patient health care
11 practices and allow health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** to incorporate the
12 knowledge of the beliefs and practices in the diagnosis and treatment of patients; and

13 (3) Methods to enable health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** to
14 increase the health literacy of their patients to improve the patient’s ability to obtain,
15 process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate
16 health care decisions.

17 20–1303.

18 The Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland, the State Medical Society,
19 the Maryland Nurses Association, the Maryland State Dental Association, the
20 National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter, the Maryland Society for
21 Clinical Social Work, the Maryland Psychological Association, **THE MARYLAND**
22 **PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION**, or any other health professional association **OR**
23 **PUBLIC HEALTH ENTITY** in the State is encouraged to identify training programs, or,
24 if feasible, to develop or collaborate in the development of training programs, that:

25 (1) Address ethnic language or racial groups of interest to the health
26 care [provider] **PROFESSIONAL** members;

27 (2) Are based on the established knowledge of health care [providers]
28 **PROFESSIONALS** serving target populations;

29 (3) Are developed in collaboration with the Office of Minority Health
30 and Health Disparities; and

31 (4) Include standards that identify the degree of competency for
32 participants to qualify for completion of a program.

33 20–1304.

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1 The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shall develop a method through
2 which the appropriate professional licensing board recognizes the training received by
3 health care [providers] **PROFESSIONALS** under this subtitle, either through
4 continuing education credits or otherwise.

5 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED,** That, on or before December 1,
6 2012, universities, colleges, and higher education programs of medicine, nursing,
7 pharmacy, dentistry, social work, public health, and allied health in the State shall
8 report to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, the
9 House Health and Government Operations Committee, and the Office of Minority
10 Health and Health Disparities on the courses that have been developed independently
11 by the colleges, universities, and higher education programs or through a collaboration
12 with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities under § 20–1004(15) of the
13 Health – General Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

14 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED,** That this Act shall take effect
15 July 1, 2012.